

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 OPR-02 PER-01

SCS-03 SCA-01 A-01 MMO-01 SY-05 USSS-00 OMB-01

MCT-01 ACDA-07 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /100 W

-----049681 041724Z /42

O R 041630Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7736

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN

CINCEUR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1524

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, SS,MR

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: MORNING AFTER JULY 3 ATTACKON NOUAKCHOTT

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 1523 (NOTAL)

1. WHILE GENERAL PATTERN OF JULY 3 NOUAKCHOTT ATTACK IS REASONABLY CLEAR, DETAILS OF ENGAGEMENT REMAIN UNCONFIRMED. FOLLOWING OBTAINED FROM OBSERVATION AND VARIETY OF DIPLOMATIC AND OTHER SOURCES:

(A) ATTACKING POLISARIO FORCE CONSISTING OF 38 TO 50 LANDROVERS WAS  
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INTERCEPTED SOM20 KILOMETERS NORTH OF NOUAKCHOTT BETWEEN 1830 AND 1900Z JULY 3. FIFTEEN VEHICLES ELUDED INTERCEPTORS, AND PENETRATED TO WITHIN 5 KILOMETERS OF CITY. TWO LANDROVERS WERE INTERCEPTED BY GENDARMERIE TWO KILOMETERS NORTH OF AIRPORT. ACCORDINGHNE REPORT, POLISARIO SIMULANEOUSLY ATTACKED COPPOLANI, 30 KM NORTHWEST OF CAPITAL.

(B) MAURITANIAN MILITARY REPORTEDLY ENGAGED DEPARTING POLLUARIO  
ATTACK  
FORCE AT BEILA (TWELVE KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF CITY); SOUND OF  
HEAVY WEAPONS AND POSSIBLY ARTILLERY WAS CLEARLY AUDIBLE IN TOWN  
FROM 2310 TO 2320Z.

(C) AS OF MID-MORNING JULY 4 ATTACKING FORCE WAS REPORTEDLY 150  
KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF NOUAKCHOTT. MAURITANIAN AIR FORCE SPOTTER  
PLANES REPORTEDLY HAD RETREATING FORCE UNDER SURVEILLANCE,  
AND ARMY GROUND UNITS WERE ATTACKING NORTH-MOVING POLISARIO  
COLUMN. AIR FORCE DEFENDERS AND SKYVANS PARKED ON NOUAKCHOTT TARMAC  
LATE AFTERNOON JULY 3 HAD DISAPPEARED BY MORNING OF FOURTH.

ED) NORTH (REAR) WALLOFPRESIDENTIAL COMPOUND TOOK DIRECT HIT. GERMAN  
EMBOFF SAW 6 TO 8 ROUNDS DROP INTO 700 METER WIDE EMPTY DUNE  
AREA BETWEEN GERMAN/SPANISH/US EMBASSIES AND SOVIET COMPOUND TO  
NORTH. ALTRTO RUMORS PERSIST THAT ONE SHELL LANDED INSIDE  
SOVIET COMPOUND, SOVIET EMBOFFS ASSERT ROUNDS LANDED BOTH NORTH AND  
SOUTH OF BUT NOT IN SOVIET EMBASSY.  
MISOFFS SAW PERHAPS DOZEN ROUNDS HIT FROM 1 TO 3 KILOMETERS NORTH  
OF PRESIDENCY REAR WALL BEFORE DARKNESS FELL.

(E) AT LEAST TWO ROUNDS OVERSHOT PRESIDENCY AREA AND LANDED SOUTH OF  
MAIN STREET (ROUGHLY ONE BLOCK BEHIND MARHABA HOTEL). CIVILIAN AUTO  
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BADLY DAMAGED BY BLASHSND METAL FROM ONE; MORNING AFTER BYSTANDERS  
REPORT DRIVER WAS KILLED. SECOND ROUND IMPACTED 100 METERS AWAY  
RIDDLING  
PARKED CAR AND RESIDENCE WALL WITH SHRAPNEL. RAPIDLY CIRCULATING  
RUMORS ASSERTING NIGHTWATCHMAN AT MEDICAL CLINIC ACROSS FROM  
MARHABA WAS KILLED AND TEENAGER HIT BY SPENT BULLET.

(F) MEMBER PRESIDENTIAL TOLD EMBOFFS THAT ONE TROOPER INSIDE  
PRESIDENTIAL COMPOUND WAS WOUNDED IN LEG BY SHRAPNEL.

2. ALTHOUGH SECURITY AT NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT HAS BEEN NOTICEABLY TIGHTENED

AND MORE SOLDIERS THAN USUAL ARE VISIBLE AROUND CITY MORNING  
AND EARLY AFTERNOON JULY 4 MOST, OF NOUAKCHOTT APPEARS TO BE  
ON BUSINESS-AS-USUAL FOOTING. INITIAL NEAR PANIC AROUSED IN  
NEIGHBORHOOD BY DECISION OF AUTHORITIES DURING EVENING ATTACK  
TO MOVE OUT RESIDENTS OF HOUSING PROJECT ON NORTHERN EDGE  
OF CITY BETWEEN FRENCH AND SOVIET EMBASSIES APPEARS TO HAVE  
WORN OFF. RUMORED FLIGHT OF LEBANESE COMMUNITY DURING EVENING  
BARRAGE UNCONFIRMED SO FAR. ONLY INDICATION OF UNEASINESS MORNING  
FOURTH IS LONG LINES OF PRIVATE VEHICLES AT GASOLINE STATIONS AROUND  
CITY WAITING TO FILL UP.

3. US COMMUNITY IN NOUAKCHOTT CURRENTLY CONSISTS OF 22 USG  
EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS, 7 TDY USAID CONTRACTORS, AND APPROXIMATELY  
20 PRIVATE CITIZENS. ALL AFE, UNHARMED, AND CALM.

HANDYSIDE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** GROUND COMBAT OPERATIONS, CASUALTIES  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SAHARA WATCH: MORNING AFTER JULY 3 ATTACKON NOUAKCHOTT  
**TAGS:** MOPS, SS, MR, POLISARIO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/a3335171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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